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Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - Tuesday, March 5, 2019

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Report: Coal Ash contamination widespread in U.S., Pa.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA A new report finds coal ash pollution is leaking into groundwater at nine power plants around Pennsylvania and over 200 nationwide. The report, from the Environmental Integrity Project, found over 90 percent of sites that store coal ash are leaking levels of contamination exceeding EPA health standards. At one former coal plant near Pittsburgh, arsenic levels in the groundwater are 372 times EPA's safe drinking water standards. Though groundwater near these sites isn't necessarily used for drinking water, the contaminants can migrate underground into private drinking water wells, rivers and streams, and eventually into public drinking water systems, said the report's lead author, Abel Russ with the Environmental Integrity Project. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection spokesman Neil Shader said in an email that public water drinking water systems in the state are required to treat their water for pollutants found in coal ash, including arsenic. Two of the nine sites are in central Pennsylvania, and the rest are in western Pennsylvania. Recent federal rules require utilities to store coal ash in lined landfills or ash ponds. But Russ says the utilities are mostly using storage sites that pre-date those rules. "So they dumped it in unlined pits frequently in contact with groundwater and they just kept filling them up for decades, and this is the end result," Russ said. "We're basically seeing the same thing everywhere, to a greater or lesser degree. Some sites have more, and some sites have less, but they all typically have unsafe levels."... Pennsylvania has eight active coal ash landfills and 13 active surface impoundments, or ash ponds, EPA spokeswoman Terri White said in an email. She said EPA was "reviewing the Environmental Integrity Project report issued today and cannot comment on its contents yet." White added the monitoring data collected and published by the utilities is only one part of the 2015 Coal Ash rule's requirements. When a landfill or coal ash pond is found to be contaminating the groundwater "above specified levels, the regulations require the owner or operator of the facility to initiate measures to clean up the contamination," White said...

Study Finds Coal Ash Contamination Widespread In Ohio Valley

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING More than 90 percent of the nation's regulated coal ash repositories are leaking unsafe levels of toxic chemicals into nearby groundwater, including ash sites at more than 30 coal-fired power plants in the Ohio Valley. A new analysis released Monday by the Environmental Integrity Project and other advocacy groups looked at federally-mandated groundwater data from 265 coal plants and their more than 550 coal ash sites across the country. The data show unsafe levels of pollutants including lead, arsenic and mercury are leaking into nearby groundwater from coal ash sites at 14 coal-fired power plants in Kentucky, 10 in Ohio, and 7 in West Virginia. "This is a crisis because coal ash is poisoning an invaluable and irreplaceable resource," said Lisa Evans, senior counsel with the environmental advocacy group Earthjustice, and one of the co-authors of the report. "Even if this water is not now used for drinking, contaminated groundwater flows to lakes and streams and can contaminate these waters making them unsafe for fishing, recreation and irrigation." The groups analyzed industry-supplied groundwater data required by the U.S. EPA under its 2015 coal ash rule... The report's findings mirror those published last year by the Ohio

Valley ReSource and member station WFPL. In Kentucky and West Virginia, every power plant covered under the EPA rules had coal ash waste sites with evidence of contaminated groundwater. In some cases, the data showed levels of pollutants many times higher than the federal drinking water standards. For example, coal ash sites near West Virginia's Pleasants Power Station had levels of the neurotoxin arsenic 16 times what the EPA deems safe. The radioactive and cancer-causing pollutant radium was found at levels six times higher than acceptable...

Commentary: Farmers see major improvements in new clean water proposal

HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers have proposed a new plan to clarify what bodies of water and areas around waterways should be regulated by the federal government in conjunction with the Clean Water Act. The new proposal has been drafted to replace a flawed rule that was momentarily put in place in 2015. That rule was immediately challenged in the courts because of its vague, broad and confusing provisions that provided unprecedented authority for government agencies to regulate land use. After a variety of court decisions, the rule has been struck down in 28 states and has never been implemented. Farmers want clean water and clear rules, and that is why we are encouraged by the new rule proposed by EPA and the Corps. Farmers across Pennsylvania and the United States are committed to protecting America's waterways and drinking water. The new clean water rule should provide us with the regulatory certainty we need to farm confidently and ensure that we are implementing practices to protect our natural resources. Additionally, there are already comprehensive state regulations in place here in Pennsylvania to protect waterways from farm runoff, but that fact was largely ignored during public comments several years ago. Furthermore, any modification to the Clean Water Act will not change or weaken the Safe Drinking Water Act, which is the primary federal law that protects all public drinking water supplies in the United States...Overall, I'm enthused by the proposal, which should provide farmers with clearer guidelines for us to follow, while establishing requirements that will further improve water quality.

Commentary: Why I don't trust government to save us from GenX

FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER (W.Va.) We ran that headline on Page 1 again — "Elevated levels of GenX found near plant". How many times have we said it now? Twenty? Thirty? A hundred? Maybe even more? It's like a drumbeat that won't stop. It doesn't end because there's that much of the stuff out there, atmospheric emissions spread for decades by the winds and soaked into the ground by the rain, and more of it in the Cape Fear River. not just in the water but deep in sediment, where it may sit for years, a gift that keeps on giving. If you think government could have prevented this mess by more rigorous oversight of the former DuPont plant — now run by the chemical giant's spinoff, Chemours — you're likely right. The companies have long manufactured chemicals there that are known for their environmental persistence — they stick around for a long, long time — and more recently have become a focus because of their health effects, which include cancers and other illnesses. But despite all our environmental advances of the past 50 years, including passage of the Clean Water Act and the launching of the Environmental Protection Agency, the fact is that most industrial chemicals remain unregulated and largely untested. And chemical companies, which employ thousands and make big political contributions, have a lot of friends in government. The chemicals made by DuPont and Chemours at their sprawling Fayetteville Works, down on the Bladen County line, are wonder products that have given us things most of us would be loathe to lose. That includes the nonstick cookware you just made your eggs in, and the Gore-Tex jacket you've been wearing all the time in this wickedly rainy winter. Would you give up your stain-free carpet or armchair upholstery? Do you want your pizza delivered in an uncoated box that will be soggy and dripping by the time it reaches your house? All of those coatings are made with the kinds of chemicals manufactured down the road on the banks of the Cape Fear River... Cut to the bottom line: One state inspector discovered the problem that we're facing today 15 years ago and state environmental regulators gagged him instead of doing what should be their core job: protecting the public's health and safety. So in the same week in which we saw the U.S. Senate confirm a former coal lobbyist to lead the EPA, you don't need to ask me why I don't expect government to do its job and keep our environment clean. Our rivers may not catch fire anymore, but that doesn't mean we're safe. I'm glad those pesky environmental watchdog groups are out there. Sadly, they're our first line of defense — maybe our only defense.

Tracking life in DC's urban streams has its ups — and downs

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL (Friday) Regular visitors to the 1,800-acre national park surrounding Rock Creek in Washington, DC, might be surprised to learn what's living — and what's struggling to live — just below the water's surface. For starters, American eels have been spotted in Rock Creek tributaries often enough — once in 2010 and three times last year — that the long, slithery sightings are no longer considered a fluke. Their presence was the highlight of a [28-page report](#) recently released by the Audubon Naturalist Society, whose staff members and volunteers have been counting species in three Rock Creek tributaries for nearly a decade. "We'd been concerned about whether [eels] could make it up Rock Creek, but [there was] a lot of work done to remove dams and obstacles to fish passage," said Cathy Wiss, coordinator of the ANS water quality monitoring program. She said the snakelike fish lives in freshwater but returns to the ocean to spawn. "They're a good indicator species." The report also identifies a "surprising diversity of life" in the heavily urbanized streams, which include Melvin Hazen Run, Pinehurst Branch and Normanstone Run. Like streams in many other cities — into which rain washes pollution from nearby parking lots, streets and rooftops — their water quality is considered "poor" or "very degraded." But that doesn't mean they're lifeless. Since 2011, the ANS and its teams of volunteers have gone out each season to net 20, 1-foot-square samples of what's living in the streams, sorting them into buckets for identification according to the Maryland Biological Stream Survey's protocol, then putting them back in the water.

Navy holds public meeting, will begin testing wells near Northwest Annex for possible contaminants

13 NEWS NOW NORFOLK (Friday) CHESAPEAKE, Va. — The U.S. Navy is staying on top of potential water contamination concerns in Chesapeake. On Thursday, it held two public meetings for people who live near the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hampton Roads-Northwest Annex near Chesapeake, Virginia. The informal-style meeting was a chance for residents to have a better understanding of the water sampling procedures the Navy could begin as early as tomorrow. The first meeting was at the Northwest Annex Gymnasium from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and the second one was at the Mariner Community Recreation Center from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Navy had representatives from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Region 3, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Health and the City of Chesapeake. Test results will determine if PFOS and PFOA, two types of chemicals known collectively as PFAS, may have seeped through groundwater and into private water wells at nearby homes. They'll also determine whether the chemical levels are higher than what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends. The most common thing the Navy uses the chemicals for has been through the firefighting agent, aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). Tammy Redenius, a nearby resident, said she has already scheduled a date for the Navy to collect water samples from her home. She was relieved to learn the Navy will conduct tests. "I'm actually really glad," said Redenius. "I'm sure it's expensive to have your water tested." Others, like Patrick Jones, said they are anxious for the test results. "[It's] Very concerning," said Jones. "My first thought was a possible resale of my house. Then, we think about our health, but first and foremost, health is more important than the resale of the house." Jones said he and his family have switched to drinking bottled water since they learned the Navy would begin testing their well for contaminants...

Frustrated by EPA, states blaze ahead on PFAS

GREENWIRE EPA's action plan on toxic chemicals found in drinking water did not satisfy several states that plan to push forward with their own policies. The per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, plan announced last month promised a decision from the agency within the year on maximum contaminant level regulations for two chemicals, PFOA and PFOS. Some experts say the regulatory process could take as long as 10 years before a rule is finalized. And while EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said he has "every intention" to set a limit, the agency could come back in a year and decide it won't regulate the chemicals, which have been linked to cancer and thyroid problems. That is why states should "press on," said Betsy Southerland, the former director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water. So far, only New Jersey has a maximum contaminant level, or MCL, for a chemical in the PFAS family. Citing federal inaction, however, several states have stepped up with their own plans to regulate types of PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS. At least seven states have policies or have indicated they are pursuing policies stricter than EPA's current health advisory of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and PFOS. They include Alaska, California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. "I have never seen anything this big happen this quickly, and I attribute this to the ability of communities to organize," said Wendy Heiger-Bernays, a clinical professor of environmental health at Boston University. "I think the states should be running with it," Heiger-Bernays continued. "By waiting, we are exposing people

unnecessarily." At least eight states have adopted 11 bills related to PFAS, according to Safer States. "EPA's plan only increases the need for state policies that ensure safe drinking water and healthy communities," said Sarah Doll, the national director of Safer States. "The bottom line is that we need to stop the use of these harmful chemicals and states are stepping up to do that."...

Lawmakers Look to Crack Down on Federal Employee Travel

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE Lawmakers in both parties have put forward legislation to place new restrictions on the travel of federal employees, seeking more oversight and ethical spending of taxpayer dollars. The 2019 Taxpayers Don't Incur Meaningless Expenses (Taxpayers DIME) Act ([H.R. 1463](#)) would require federal agencies to report to Congress each quarter on the travel of any senior official on government aircraft. The measure would also task the Office of Government Ethics with developing new suggestions for "strengthening federal travel regulations." The legislation would also block funding for any travel that violates the portions of federal regulations dictating restrictions on the use of government aircraft. "When I was elected to Congress, I made a commitment to clean up Washington and end the special taxpayer-funded perks for elected officials and bureaucrats," said Rep. Tom O'Halleran, D-Ariz., who introduced the bill. "We must hold our government leaders to the highest standards, and with so many high-profile ethics violations in the past years, it is clear we have failed to do that. No matter who controls Congress or the White House, we have to hold everyone accountable." Several Trump administration officials have become ensnared by various travel scandals, leading, at least in part, to the resignations of former Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke, former Veterans Affairs Department Secretary David Shulkin and former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. O'Halleran introduced another measure to require the Defense Department to report quarterly on presidential travel, including costs incurred by the commander in chief's travel to properties he or his family owns or operates...

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

[Editorial: Stop oil and gas drillers' cruelty to sea creatures](#) Imagine what it would be like to live with blasts as loud as a rocket going off every 10 seconds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for several months. That's what sea mammals will endure if lawsuits from coastal states and environmental groups aren't successful in stopping President Donald Trump's reckless plans to allow off shore oil exploration in the Atlantic Ocean. Oil and gas companies use seismic air guns which blast air into the ocean floor to find deposits of oil or natural gas. The blasts are especially dangerous to whales and dolphins because can cause deafness. These animals rely on sound to communicate, navigate, and find food. If they can't hear, they can't navigate, and can't eat. Environmentalists say thousands could die if seismic testing is allowed. Studies also have found that the blasts lower the amount of zooplankton, essential to the food chain, not just for sea animals but eventually for humans. And, catch rates for fish also decline in areas where air guns are shooting, even when the blasts are as far as 20 miles away... Our country lags in fighting the effects of global warming when it should be leading the charge. The Trump administration's own National Climate Assessment, released last year, noted that more people will die prematurely and suffer from respiratory ailments if climate change remains unaddressed. The president said he didn't believe his own report. The Trump administration is unlikely to pull its head out of the sand, which makes the courts and Congress the best hopes for stopping seismic blasting. Call your representatives and tell them to stop seismic testing before dead dolphins wash up on our beaches and local economies are destroyed.

[N.J. coastal towns face nearly \\$1.6B in annual damage from sea rise, flooding, storms, report finds](#) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a sweeping report Friday on back bay flooding in New Jersey that singles out climate change as a "significant" contributor and says coastal communities face a combined average of nearly \$1.6 billion a year in damage in the future if steps aren't taken. The report, called the "New Jersey Back Bays Coastal Storm Risk Management Study," analyzes engineering, economic, social and environmental issues surrounding flooding in the back bays, defined as tidal waterways located landward of the Atlantic Ocean coast in Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Burlington, and Cape May Counties. In all, it's a 950-square-mile area that includes 3,400 miles of shoreline. Though attention is often focused on tourist-filled areas facing the ocean, New Jersey's other shorelines have been a problem spot for flooding. The study was

conducted and paid for by the U.S. Army Corps' Philadelphia office and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. It presents preliminary findings on potential plans to manage tidal flooding and storm surge. "Further vulnerability to coastal storms and the potential for future, more devastating events due to changing sea level and climate change is significant," the report states. "Rising sea levels represent an inexorable process causing numerous, significant water resource problems."...

Mariner East pipeline target of possible Chester County Commission legal action (March 1) The Chester County Commission on Thursday joined a lawsuit against Sunoco Pipeline's Mariner East project and also sought deny the company to two parcels of land, at least temporarily. "Time and again, Sunoco has been severely lacking in effective communication and transparency and we have no choice but to take these formal measures," said Michelle Kichline, chair of the commissioners. "Even with the groundswell of activity and appeals from elected officials, grassroots organizations and residents affected by the pipeline, the company is not playing ball. We have no confidence that they ever will and we are done with trying to get answers on our own." The Mariner East is planned to bring natural gas liquids from the Marcellus and Utica Shale via a 20-inch pipeline. Natural gas liquids are defined as propane, ethane and butane. Plans call for new pipeline to be buried, as well as upgrades made to existing pipelines...

Controversial plan to build pipeline through New Jersey Pinelands appears dead (March 1) A plan to build a controversial \$90 million gas pipeline through the New Jersey Pinelands could be dead after a main reason for its existence is now gone, and environmentalists are rejoicing. However, the company behind the pipeline said it still may seek to build, but possibly with a different path. South Jersey Gas had received approval from the Pinelands Commission to construct a 22-mile-long, mostly underground pipeline known as the Cape Atlantic Reliability Project. It was designed to run from Millville to Upper Township in Cape May County to feed the B.L. England electric generating plant. The plant was under order by the state to stop burning coal. The plan was to convert it to natural gas fed by the pipeline...

PHILLY VOICE.COM

EPA's plan to regulate chemical contaminants in drinking water is a drop in the bucket The chemicals at issue, PFOA and PFOS, have contaminated communities across the country affecting millions of Americans. After more than a year of community meetings and deliberations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced in February 2019 that it would begin the process of regulating two drinking water contaminants, seeking to stem a growing national public health crisis. If EPA follows through, this would be the first time in nearly 20 years that it has set an enforceable standard for a new chemical contaminant under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The chemicals at issue, PFOA and PFOS, have contaminated drinking water supplies across the country affecting millions of Americans. They belong to a class of synthetic chemicals called PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, that are widely used in products including firefighting foams, waterproof apparel, stain-resistant furniture, food packaging and even dental floss. These chemicals have been linked with numerous health problems, including cancers, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, low birth weight and effects on the immune system. Studies show exposure to PFAS in children can dampen the effectiveness of vaccines – a topic my colleagues and I are currently investigating as part of a project called PFAS-REACH. In laboratory studies, low levels of PFAS can alter mammary gland development, which could have implications for increasing breast cancer susceptibility later in life. What's more, PFAS are highly persistent. Once released into the environment, they don't break down – a fact that has led many to dub these substances "forever chemicals."...

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Greene County gas line transferred from Rice to Equitrans garners \$1.5 million fine (Monday) A natural gas pipeline project in Greene County that has been on unstable ground for more than a year has resulted in a \$1.5 million fine against Equitrans Midstream Corp. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection found multiple cases of poor erosion controls and sediment flowing into streams on a section of a gas gathering line in Aleppo and Richhill townships. The 7.5-mile Beta Trunk pipeline construction project belonged to Rice Midstream Partners when it was permitted in July 2017. It was designed to collect natural gas from nearby wells and bring them into the transmission system...

Buffer zones debated for drilling near state's dams

Hundreds of shale gas wells are crowding close to and sometimes snaking under Pennsylvania's many dams. That's because there's no risk-based setback requirements for shale gas development around dams in Pennsylvania, now the nation's second biggest natural gas producing state, with more than 11,500 Marcellus and Utica shale gas wells drilled and fracked, another 10,000 permitted, and the potential for tens of thousands more in the future. That's in contrast to buffer zones of 3,000 to 4,000 feet around scores of dams in other shale gas drilling states. Examples of shale gas wells near dams in southwest Pennsylvania are easy to find.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Operator Of Natural Gas Gathering Pipeline Fined In Greene County The operator of a natural gas gathering pipeline in Greene County has been fined \$1.5 million for environmental violations related to erosion and sediment control. The state Department of Environmental Protection said Monday it had assessed the civil penalty against Rice Midstream Holdings LLC for violations that occurred on the Beta Trunk Pipeline in Aleppo and Richhill townships in 2017 and 2018. Although the pipeline is now owned by Equitrans Midstream Corp., the violations began prior to the acquisition of Rice in 2018. The Beta Trunk Pipeline is an approximately 7.5-mile gathering line within a larger Beta System that takes natural gas from several well pads to transmission facilities. Although portions of the line are in service pursuant to DEP permitting in 2017, portions remain under construction. Rice is required to use erosion and sediment control practices in its pipeline construction to prevent sediment pollution into water sources, the DEP said. On Oct. 11, 2017, Rice reported — and a same-day DEP inspection confirmed — sediment-laden water overwhelmed unnamed tributaries to Mudlick Fork and Harts Run. The DEP said best management practices were not properly maintained or not installed at all...

Op-Ed: PA Budget Proposal Hurts Local Environmental Projects, Bipartisan Consensus One of the things that gets forgotten in Harrisburg is how powerful it can be to work across the aisle to move Pennsylvania forward. While bipartisan agreement is rare right now, one of the few programs my colleagues on both sides of the aisle support are environmental funds that drive tax dollars back to local municipalities and out of Harrisburg. Even Gov. Tom Wolf campaigned on supporting government that works; yet last month, the governor proposed a \$78 million cut to environmental funds that have supported thousands of projects across Western Pennsylvania. The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Keystone) and the Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) were established by bipartisan consensus in the 1990s to support local projects that reinvest in our communities, heal environmental damage of the past and preserve our environment for generations to come. The Keystone Fund and ESF owe their success and longevity to their direct support of community-driven projects. The dedicated funds empower local people and the private sector to address problems at their source, not from Harrisburg. Few programs provide benefits across the state and across the aisle the way the Keystone Fund does for community reinvestment. That program alone has leveraged more than \$1 billion in public/private partnerships to complete nearly 5,000 projects. Keystone and ESF come nowhere near to meeting present demand. Roughly half of all project investment proposals have to be turned away. In the case of Keystone Fund investments, 46 percent of projects are already rejected for lack of sufficient state funds...

Declining Water Quality, Litter In Buffalo Creek Watershed Among Concerns In Upcoming Report Diminishing water quality, litter, development and lack of recreational opportunities were among the chief concerns in an upcoming report on the Buffalo Creek watershed, which extends from Buffalo Township to north of Chicora in Butler County. Keeping the beautiful and biologically diverse Buffalo Creek area that way continues to be a challenge, according to an upcoming 10-year update report from the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP). The nonprofit owns Todd Nature Reserve in Buffalo Township and other biologically important areas. The nonprofit is building a nature center along the Butler-Freeport Community Trail. Almost 80 percent of the watershed in Butler and Armstrong counties is forest and farms; 99 percent is privately owned, according to Sarah Koenig, conservation director for ASWP. Audubon has been tracking and encouraging stewardship of the watershed. The nonprofit is looking for public comment for "Buffalo Creek Watershed Plan, 10 Year Update." It will post a draft of the report by May on its [website](#). The Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds awarded a \$10,000 planning grant for the report. Public sentiment on the watershed so far has been "protect what we have and make it better," Koenig said. The watershed continues to adjust to development pressures, especially in southern Butler County. A new complaint was conspicuous and widespread litter along roadways

and streams. A decade ago, when Audubon asked, the public said they wanted to: Maintain the rural landscape, create a sense of community stewardship and enhance recreational opportunities and the natural environment...

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA (NPR)

Report: Coal Ash contamination widespread in U.S., Pa. A new report finds coal ash pollution is leaking into groundwater at nine power plants around Pennsylvania and over 200 nationwide. The report, from the Environmental Integrity Project, found over 90 percent of sites that store coal ash are leaking levels of contamination exceeding EPA health standards. At one former coal plant near Pittsburgh, arsenic levels in the groundwater are 372 times EPA's safe drinking water standards. Though groundwater near these sites isn't necessarily used for drinking water, the contaminants can migrate underground into private drinking water wells, rivers and streams, and eventually into public drinking water systems, said the report's lead author, Abel Russ with the Environmental Integrity Project. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection spokesman Neil Shader said in an email that public water drinking water systems in the state are required to treat their water for pollutants found in coal ash, including arsenic. Two of the nine sites are in central Pennsylvania, and the rest are in western Pennsylvania. Recent federal rules require utilities to store coal ash in lined landfills or ash ponds. But Russ says the utilities are mostly using storage sites that pre-date those rules. "So they dumped it in unlined pits frequently in contact with groundwater and they just kept filling them up for decades, and this is the end result," Russ said. "We're basically seeing the same thing everywhere, to a greater or lesser degree. Some sites have more, and some sites have less, but they all typically have unsafe levels." ... Pennsylvania has eight active coal ash landfills and 13 active surface impoundments, or ash ponds, EPA spokeswoman Terri White said in an email. She said EPA was "reviewing the Environmental Integrity Project report issued today and cannot comment on its contents yet." White added the monitoring data collected and published by the utilities is only one part of the 2015 Coal Ash rule's requirements. When a landfill or coal ash pond is found to be contaminating the groundwater "above specified levels, the regulations require the owner or operator of the facility to initiate measures to clean up the contamination," White said...

DEP issues \$1.5M fine for problems at Greene County pipeline construction site State environmental officials have levied a \$1.5 million fine against a natural gas pipeline company for problems at a construction site in Greene County. The fine stems from violations that began in October 2017 along the Rice Midstream Holdings' Beta Trunk Pipeline. The 7.5-mile line spans Aleppo and Richhill townships. Water containing sediment, such as dirt, soil or clay, overtook erosion controls and flowed into tributaries, according to the Department of Environmental Protection. The department reports that some of those controls were not properly maintained, or they were missing entirely. "We didn't see any major impacts to aquatic life," DEP spokesperson Lauren Fraley said. "However, sediment pollution is a major issue, and it's something that we take very seriously." Construction stopped temporarily as the problem areas were fixed. Then in May last year, three landslides occurred, according to DEP. "It happened in a rural area of Greene County where there aren't a lot of homes nearby, but this is something that we have been and will continue to be doing regular inspections of," Fraley said. Equitrans Midstream Corp. now owns the pipeline after a merger last year. A spokesperson for the company said in a statement that Equitrans Midstream is committed to responsible operations that will safeguard the environment. "For this particular case, we wanted to proactively work with the PA DEP to resolve these historical issues and move forward in a compliant manner," spokesperson Natalie Cox said. "We operate with integrity at all times and if something does not achieve the requisite compliance objective, we will take responsibility and do our best to implement the appropriate corrective actions." The Beta Trunk Pipeline is part of a larger system of pipelines that carry natural gas from several well pads to transmission facilities, according to the DEP. Some parts of the line are in service, and Fraley said most construction is complete.

BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT

Pennsylvania Pipeline Company Fined \$1.5M for Sediment Pollution A Pennsylvania pipeline operator will pay a \$1.5 million penalty for violating the state's clean water law after sediment from its operations contaminated nearby streams, among other issues connected with its Beta Trunk Pipeline in Greene County, Pa. Rice Midstream Holdings LLC allegedly violated the state's Clean Streams Law and other laws when it allowed water containing sediment to spill into tributaries of Mudlick Fork and Harts Run on Oct. 11, 2017, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection said in a consent order. The company is required to use controls, such as silt fences, during its pipeline construction to prevent sediment from washing into nearby waterways, the department said in a press release. According to the order,

the oil and gas company, a Canonsburg, Pa.-based subsidiary of Equitrans Midstream Corp., failed to maintain the fences, which allowed the sediment to spill out. The violations happened before Equitrans acquired the company, the department said...

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Op-Ed: We Really Do Need To Worry About Climate Change And Act Climate has been in the news, thanks to the release of several concerning reports, plus reactions to the proposed Green New Deal. Our Lehigh colleague in Economics, Tony O'Brien, recently published an opinion piece in these pages (Feb. 17) in which he claimed that climate-change impacts won't be very bad, so there's no need to go all-in on the Green New Deal, and that a nonideological view suggests a carbon tax is the far better approach. We'd actually agree that a carbon tax would be one important part of an effective climate policy, but what motivates us to write is concern over widespread misunderstandings of the earth system and how it pertains to people and society, misunderstandings that happen to be well illustrated in O'Brien's column. First, it's our judgment that there's plenty to be really worried about, as reported in the fourth National Climate Assessment and related analyses. We're not talking "hysteria," just deep concern for our grandchildren and then theirs. Solid science shows that by the end of the century the direct impacts on the economy could easily exceed several trillions of dollars per year. Although not economists, we think it's naive to depend on uninterrupted growth, future wealth and projections from the past in a nation that faces the costs of entitlements and infrastructure replacement, with energy costs unlikely to be nearly as cheap as those that enabled post-World War II prosperity. The stark reality is that despite all the talk, global-emissions trends have closely followed the highest "business as usual" pathways. There's been no sign of an invisible hand steering us to another course. Our next concern is that economic and impact projections often err on the cautious side, either to avoid sounding alarmist or to stick to sectors that it's easier to hang numbers on (such as Figure 29.2 of the NCA). Such projections ignore anything like full valuation of fundamental ecosystem and natural-resources services, especially when those services are as hard to put a dollar on as they are essential, and they omit consideration of the human and economic costs of human hardships and migrations driven by climate change. Beyond that, there are elements of the earth system and the natural world that are beyond valuation, either because of their fundamental nature or their spiritual significance, and these are omitted from impact projections...

DuBOIS COURIER EXPRESS

Clearfield Conservation District Offers Manure Plan Writing Workshops March 16, April 13 CLEARFIELD — Did you know that all farms generating/using manure must have a manure management plan? The Clearfield County Conservation District can help you learn the regulations and write your plan. Two workshops will be held on March 16 and April 13 at the Clearfield County Fairgrounds. Topics covered by the workshop will include the revised Manure Management Manual, Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sediment Control) updates, and using PAOneStop for your Manure Management Plan. Attendees will receive a copy of the updated Manure Management Manual. One-on-one assistance will be available in order for attendees to leave the workshop with a completed Manure Management Plan for their farm...

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Commentary: Farmers see major improvements in new clean water proposal The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers have proposed a new plan to clarify what bodies of water and areas around waterways should be regulated by the federal government in conjunction with the Clean Water Act. The new proposal has been drafted to replace a flawed rule that was momentarily put in place in 2015. That rule was immediately challenged in the courts because of its vague, broad and confusing provisions that provided unprecedented authority for government agencies to regulate land use. After a variety of court decisions, the rule has been struck down in 28 states and has never been implemented. Farmers want clean water and clear rules, and that is why we are encouraged by the new rule proposed by EPA and the Corps. Farmers across Pennsylvania and the United States are committed to protecting America's waterways and drinking water. The new clean water rule should provide us with the regulatory certainty we need to farm confidently and ensure that we are implementing practices to protect our natural resources. Additionally, there are already comprehensive state regulations in place here in Pennsylvania to protect waterways from farm runoff, but that fact was largely ignored during public comments several years ago. Furthermore, any modification to the Clean Water Act will not change or weaken the Safe Drinking Water Act, which is the primary federal law that protects all public drinking water supplies in the United States...Overall, I'm enthused by the proposal, which should provide farmers with clearer guidelines for us to follow, while establishing requirements that will further improve water quality.

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

Editorial: Lawmakers Should Recognize Need For Infrastructure Program And A Fair Severance Tax

WASHINGTON OBSERVER-REPORTER

Editorial: Pennsylvania Shouldn't Save Nuclear Power Plants Let's say you're trying to declutter your home. You realize you haven't plugged in your VCR since 2000. In fact, it still has a copy of "Titanic" in it. But you think you *might* have some use for it *someday*. So the VCR lingers on a shelf, and your home gets no closer to achieving a Marie Kondo-like ideal of order and harmony. That seems to be the sort of thinking that's driving Pennsylvania Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman when it comes to the commonwealth's nuclear power plants. Even as nuclear power has become safer in the 40 years since the partial core meltdown at Dauphin County's Three Mile Island put the nation on edge, it has lost out in the energy marketplace to renewables and natural gas. This has led to the closing of some nuclear plants, and there's a distinct possibility that Three Mile Island and Beaver Valley in Beaver County will be joining them. Yet Corman said last week that Pennsylvania should save the plants because, at some undetermined point in the future, it might need them in case the state needs to diversify its energy portfolio. According to Corman, Pennsylvania should accord nuclear power the same kind of preferential treatment that is given to renewables like solar, wind and biofuels under the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act. Approved in 2004, the law requires that, by 2021, utilities purchase 8 percent of their power from renewable sources. Corman also said he is opposed to tacking an additional charge onto ratepayer bills in order to prop up the commonwealth's nuclear power plants. But nuclear power plants should not be kept alive if they no longer have a viable position in the marketplace. Nuclear power providers have been losing to renewables and natural gas in wholesale electricity auctions. Aging nuclear plants are also at a disadvantage due to the increasing cost of equipment, fuel and reactor components...

WILKES-BARRE TIMES LEADER

Editorial: Of Deer, Driving And Responsibility Deer! It happened too fast to stop, swerve out of the way, or do anything but make impact. A member of our editorial board is now waiting on more than \$1,000 in repairs on his pickup after crashing into one of nature's wonders in the middle of the afternoon one day last week. Fortunately, the vehicle is still drivable. And yes, we know \$1,000 in body work indicates more of a glancing blow than a direct strike. (Again, fortunately.) But the roadway mishap, specifically how fast it all happened, got us thinking a lot about people's driving habits in general and how quickly a mundane trip to town could turn into something much more memorable. Just look at what happened Friday night in Wilkes-Barre, when two young people were struck by a vehicle at Wilkes-Barre Boulevard and Northampton Street. And do you remember the August 2017 near-tragedy in Rice Township when a driver struck a family of six and a relative out for a walk along a quiet road in their development? Among the injured that day was a 10-month-old toddler in a stroller. Everyone survived, but some were seriously injured. We still don't have all the details on last Friday's crash in Wilkes-Barre, and the driver in the Rice Township accident was ultimately spared from criminal charges after a lengthy investigation. So, we point to these cases not to assign blame but to serve as a reminder to everyone of the enormous responsibility we accept when climbing behind our steering wheels every day... We know this column is not going to stop DUIs, or speeding or poor driving in general. And accidents will always happen. We're just hoping some people who read this will be reminded of the responsibility they have to help keep everyone safe. Once you hit something or someone, it's too late.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

Rescuing nuclear power plants could come with conditions (March 3) HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — With nuclear power plant owners seeking a rescue in Pennsylvania, a number of state lawmakers are signaling that they are willing to help, with conditions. Giving nuclear power plants what opponents call a bailout could mean a politically risky vote to hike electric bills. One key motivator for lawmakers could be attaching it to a package that steps up the fight against climate change by taxing carbon emissions or expanding subsidies for renewable energies, such as wind and solar power. Labor union-friendly lawmakers may insist on guarantees that nuclear power plants stay open and retain all workers. Democrats who favor clean energy may insist that subsidies for nuclear power plants be temporary. Others say the legislation may also need concessions for the natural gas industry to win over enough opponents.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Maryland governor aims to build at Oxon Cove. Hikers hope that won't happen. I check that I have water and granola bars then tighten the straps on my backpack and set off on my journey. Destination: Oxon Cove. I'm following **Barbara J. Saffir** and **Dan Marcin**, two volunteers with the Sierra Club. Barbara's organizing a group hike for later in the month and she's scoping out a place that's been in the news lately. "We want people to know the value of this land before anything's decided," Barbara says as we amble past a chicken coop and a dairy barn. Oxon Cove is two things: It's a historic Maryland farm tucked into the elbow of the Beltway and Interstate 295, northeast of the Wilson Bridge. And it's parkland. The 500 acres is overseen by the National Park Service — for now, at least. We walk up a path that turns to gravel then increases gently in elevation until we're overlooking a meadow. The late-winter palette is all browns and yellows. The rain has filled the landscape's dimples with pools of water. "Look at this!" Barbara exclaims. "This is a huge piece of land!" ...

The Energy 202 Blog: Oil giant makes business case for taking climate change seriously The chief economist of one of the world's biggest oil companies is urging other companies to take climate change seriously — and sooner rather than later. If not, it might be bad for business. That's the warning from BP's Spencer Dale, who made the rounds in Washington last week explaining the business case for finding a solution for the warming planet. "All the climate arguments are real, urgent and important," Dale said in an interview with The Washington Post. Despite working for one of the world's biggest producers of fossil fuels, Dale said the longer the world waits to address rising emissions, the more "draconian" the changes in the global economy will have to be...

The Energy 202 Blog: Climate change is Jay Inslee's top priority in Washington. How will it play in 2020? Climate change is poised to be a big issue in the race for the Democratic nomination. But there hasn't been a candidate who has made the issue the center of his or her pitch for president — until now. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee launched his bid for president Friday to address what he called in his first campaign video "the most urgent challenge of our time." While the crowded field for the Democratic nomination already includes five senators co-sponsoring the ambitious Green New Deal resolution, Inslee is prioritizing climate change to the exclusion of other issues. He said "climate change" or "global warming" in the video at least 10 times. It was the first, last and only issue he mentioned in his video announcement...

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Quarantined! State demands people in 11 New Castle County zip codes check for these pests (Friday) State agriculture officials are quarantining 11 New Castle County zip codes to try to stop the spread of an invasive bug that threatens Delaware's orchards, nurseries and forests. The spotted lanternfly was first found in Wilmington in late 2017. It had been discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014. The plant hopper native to China, India and Vietnam sucks sap from stems, leaves and trunks. "It has all the earmarks of our most serious pests," said Doug Tallamy, a University of Delaware entomology professor who added the species will have major effects on apple growers and other farmers growing ornamental fruits. Agriculture officials hope to stop the species' eggs from hatching this April and May. The quarantined zip codes are 19702, 19703, 19707, 19711, 19801, 19802, 19803, 19805, 19807, 19808 and 19810. The quarantine could be expanded, officials said. Delaware has instituted other quarantines in the past for invasive species such as the gypsy moth...

Sea level rise holding back Delaware beach property values Whether new homebuyers, sellers and real estate agents know it or not, the impacts of sea level rise are hitting Delaware home prices, a new study shows. In the nation's lowest-

lying state, where sea level rise is occurring nearly twice as fast as the global average, real estate agents marketing high-dollar waterfront properties have been thrilled to see prices skyrocketing in recent years. But that good news may be masking a much different trend. Flooding from rising sea levels means some homes are not worth as much as they should be, researchers say. Matthew Eby, executive director of the research nonprofit First Street Foundation, said this is just the beginning of coastal flooding's influence on beach real estate values. Researchers with First Street Foundation, a New York-based team of marketers and researchers, recently released the latest in a series of studies examining how flooding from sea level rise has impacted the value of coastal homes. They evaluated 160,000 real estate transactions in coastal Delaware from 2005 through 2017 and found that properties could be worth another \$300 million in value lost to flooding caused by sea level rise. "In 2005, flooding started becoming much more frequent, and stories about it were becoming much more frequent," said Steven McAlpine, head of data science at the foundation. "It may not be a depreciation, but people have started knowing there's a new risk and that the risk is increasing. People are reacting because that's what markets are showing."...

Energy company says it's bringing LNG port to the Delaware River For many, a plan to build an LNG port on the Delaware River brings memories of New Jersey's and Delaware's last territorial dispute. A New York energy company plans to build a liquefied natural gas port on the Delaware River near the First State, according to a recent securities filing. It is the latest proposal for a long-controversial idea to allow cargo ships containing the condensed, liquid version of the combustible fuel to sail through Delaware Bay, past New Castle and Wilmington and under the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The company, New Fortress Energy, did not disclose the specific location for the proposed LNG port, but said it would be along the Delaware River and 195 miles from its natural gas liquifying facility northwest of Scranton, Pennsylvania. A number of ports near or in Delaware roughly match that description, including those in Wilmington and Chester and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. But the evidence points to New Jersey. Three years ago, New Fortress Energy proposed a fuel terminal and port for a property it owns in Gloucester County, New Jersey – one that for decades had been home to a DuPont dynamite factory. At the time, environmentalists from the Sierra Club suspected that the company had plans to bring LNG ships into a port there, even though the company publicly backed away from any such idea in 2016 amid opposition from residents. In recent months, several postings for job openings located at the New Jersey site have appeared online, including for a construction engineer with expertise in LNG. New Fortress Energy, which became publicly traded in January, did not reply to a request to comment. Greenwich Township, New Jersey, officials also did not reply to requests...

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Cape district developing strategic plan Cape Henlopen School District officials want the community's help in developing a strategic plan to guide district-wide goals for the next five years. Assistant Superintendent Jenny Nauman said the district partnered with Hanover Research of Washington, D.C., to create the plan and a survey, which asks respondents about academics, school resources and environment, family and community relations, and operations. "We want as many people as possible to take the survey," Nauman said. "Feedback will inform our mission, vision and priorities going forward, and will help us meet the unique needs of our stakeholders." Cape Superintendent Bob Fulton said students, staff, parents and community members are invited to take the survey to help the district determine the priorities most important to stakeholders...

Lewes committee wants to change density calculation Lewes may follow Sussex County's lead and exclude tidal wetlands from density calculations on a property being annexed into the city. The annexation regulation committee voted unanimously Feb. 25 to recommend excluding tidal wetlands, but stopped short of recommending the exclusion of all wetlands. If approved, the new density calculation would apply only to properties seeking annexation in one of the city's two new annexation zones, AX-RES and AX-MIX. By excluding tidal wetlands, officials limit the maximum number of homes permitted in a development to actual buildable land, in most cases. "I don't understand why we would not do that," said committee member Bob Patterson. Deputy Mayor Fred Beaufait, the committee chair, said it's likely the correct action to ensure the city stays competitive with Sussex County for land development. The goal of the annexation zones was to create new districts that were a mix of Lewes and Sussex County regulations. The result was intended to be a zone that's more strict than the county, but more lenient than the city...

Lewes planners, public tour Fishers Cove site Members of the Lewes Planning Commission and the public toured a property eyed for development along the Great Marsh Feb. 27. Fishers Cove is proposed to be a 18-unit subdivision

between Rodney Avenue and the University of Delaware College of Earth, Ocean and Environment campus. Access to the 12-acre property would be via Rodney Avenue and the development's main road would skirt wetlands on the way to the highest point of the land, where most of the homes would be built. The property is zoned R-2, low-density residential, where 10,000-square-foot lots are required. The smallest lot on the proposal is just over 10,000 square feet, but most range from 12,000 to 16,000 square feet...

Editorial: It's cleanup time for Sussex County Could it really be that simple? Certainly worth a chance. Certainly worth \$13,516. As Sussex County Government Affairs Manager Mike Costello recently reported to council members, the county paid that amount over the past six months for a Sussex Correctional/DelDOT program involving prisoner cleanup crews that worked 83 miles of county roads. It was a refreshing report. A break from the interminable - albeit important - land use, conditional use, and zoning discussions that typically dominate Sussex County Council meetings. This report was about boots on the ground. Getting it done. It's important right now. Days are lengthening. Winter's grip is still keeping fields and trees leafless and brown. Daily commutes are back in the light of day, affording motorists clear views, giving a sense of what's been happening in winter's darkness, amplifying the ugliness of senseless litter. We're the visitors that will be coming. We're the tourists and residents. We are the destination, and we want our county to be inspiring for all of us. We want travelers passing through to say: "The people here are proud of where they live." Cleanliness and beauty go hand in hand and are not expensive. Cleanup crews provide all kinds of benefits, not the least of which is the productive work they accomplish. The program provides an opportunity for them to make money and feel a sense of accomplishment. They get outdoors and active, looking forward at their next cans, styrofoam, plastic bags and cardboard; looking back at a landscape cleaner and more beautiful because of their presence. Like all of us, they are important resources whose efforts can make this beautiful planet - starting with our lovely county - a better place. DelDOT's Adopt-A-Highway teams are also a part of that formula, as is every one of us who can stoop down three or four times a day to pick up litter. Sussex is spending money wisely when it contracts for cleanup crews. Now's the time to amp it up. Go into spring shining and bright. Nature will be doing her part. Let's do ours.

DELAWARE PUBLIC MEDIA (NPR)

11 New Castle County zip codes quarantined over invasive fly (March 1) The state is issuing an emergency quarantine in much of northern New Castle County to prevent the spread of an invasive bug. The spotted lantern fly was first spotted in Wilmington in 2017 and several established populations have since been found in the area. Delaware's Department of Agriculture is calling for the quarantine of 11 New Castle County zip codes to stop the spread and eradicate the intruders before their eggs hatch this spring. The quarantined zip codes have been identified as having existing spotted lantern fly populations. Female spotted lantern flies lay egg masses of 30-50 egg, usually outdoors on flat surfaces. Under the quarantine, any item or material that can harbor the nests cannot be transported without taking precautions. The Ag Department has a list of regulated articles available online, and a permit process for moving those items. Department of Ag spokeswoman Stacey Hofmann says there's a plant-pest law that allows her agency to issue civil penalties if citizens don't comply. "We're not going to be out doing a checkpoint, making sure you have your compliance paper with you, but if we do find that it's moved out of the area, moved out of the quarantine zone and it's intentionally done, then we will be forced to leverage those civil penalties," she said.

MIDDLETOWN TRANSCRIPT

Emergency quarantine declared for spotted lanternfly The Delaware Department of Agriculture announced March 1 that they are quarantining 11 ZIP codes in New Castle County to eradicate, control and prevent the spread of spotted lanternfly in Delaware and to surrounding states. The spotted lanternfly is an invasive planthopper that attacks many hosts including trees, shrubs, orchards, grapes and hops. Due to quarantines in other states, interstate commerce will be impacted if the pest is transported out of the Delaware quarantine area. "We understand this quarantine will impact businesses and homeowners; however, it is required if we have any chance to control this nonnative, destructive pest. With the hatching of egg masses and the presence of adult lanternflies, the population has grown and requires treatment and control efforts," said Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse. "The impact of this pest to Delaware is large with \$8 billion of Delaware's economic activity related to agriculture. When you look at our orchards and vineyards, nursery and landscaping industry, and forestland and timber sales, you are looking at more than \$1.9 billion alone. Delaware has a lot to lose if we do not gain control over the spotted lanternfly."...

DNREC NEWS RELEASES

Emergency quarantine declared for pest threatening Delaware (Friday) Dover, Del. – The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) announced today that they are quarantining eleven zip codes in New Castle County to eradicate, control, and prevent the spread of spotted lanternfly in Delaware and to surrounding states. The spotted lanternfly is a destructive invasive plant hopper that attacks many hosts including trees, shrubs, orchards, grapes, and hops. The insect is detrimental to Delaware's agricultural industry, forests, and residential areas. Due to quarantines in other states, interstate commerce will be impacted if the pest is transported out of the Delaware quarantine area. "We understand this quarantine will impact businesses and homeowners; however, it is required if we have any chance to control this non-native, destructive pest. With the hatching of egg masses and the presence of adult lanternflies, the population has grown and requires treatment and control efforts," said Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse. "The impact of this pest to Delaware is large with 8 billion dollars of Delaware's economic activity related to agriculture. When you look at our orchards and vineyards, nursery and landscaping industry, and forestland and timber sales, you are looking at more than 1.9 billion dollars alone. Delaware has a lot to lose if we do not gain control over the spotted lanternfly."...

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Water quality standards bill up for a vote Tuesday A controversial bill that addresses the amount of carcinogens and pollutants in West Virginia's water will likely be up for a vote on the floor of the House of Delegates Tuesday, where it will likely pass. The rules bundle (Senate Bill 163) came from the Department of Environmental Protection and originally reflected the federal Environmental Protection Agency's 2015 recommendations on 60 pollutants. Legislators have since stripped the bill of those updates, reverting them back to 1980s-era recommendations...

EQT may dismiss suit against WV official if \$53.5M settlement approved If a \$53.5 million settlement involving the state's second-largest natural gas producer is approved, the company might drop its lawsuit against Austin Caperton, secretary of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Pittsburgh-based EQT Corp. will pay \$53.5 million to settle a lawsuit that alleged the company was wrongly deducting charges from royalty checks. The deal was made public in February and is pending before U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey in the Northern District of West Virginia...

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Study Finds Coal Ash Contamination Widespread In Ohio Valley More than 90 percent of the nation's regulated coal ash repositories are leaking unsafe levels of toxic chemicals into nearby groundwater, including ash sites at more than 30 coal-fired power plants in the Ohio Valley. A new analysis released Monday by the Environmental Integrity Project and other advocacy groups looked at federally-mandated groundwater data from 265 coal plants and their more than 550 coal ash sites across the country. The data show unsafe levels of pollutants including lead, arsenic and mercury are leaking into nearby groundwater from coal ash sites at 14 coal-fired power plants in Kentucky, 10 in Ohio, and 7 in West Virginia. "This is a crisis because coal ash is poisoning an invaluable and irreplaceable resource," said Lisa Evans, senior counsel with the environmental advocacy group Earthjustice, and one of the co-authors of the report. "Even if this water is not now used for drinking, contaminated groundwater flows to lakes and streams and can contaminate these waters making them unsafe for fishing, recreation and irrigation." The groups analyzed industry-supplied groundwater data required by the U.S. EPA under its 2015 coal ash rule... The report's findings mirror those published last year by the Ohio Valley ReSource and member station WFPL. In Kentucky and West Virginia, every power plant covered under the EPA rules had coal ash waste sites with evidence of contaminated groundwater. In some cases, the data showed levels of pollutants many times higher than the federal drinking water standards. For example, coal ash sites near West Virginia's Pleasants Power Station had levels of the neurotoxin arsenic 16 times what the EPA deems safe. The radioactive and

cancer-causing pollutant radium was found at levels six times higher than acceptable...

More Eagles Find Home in New River Gorge Dozens of people gathered in the New River Gorge on Saturday, March 2 to participate in the annual spring eagle survey. Thirty-five eagles were spotted, a significant increase from just a few years ago. At least 62 people participated in the eagle survey, including several who were stationed off Route 20 outside Hinton at the Brooks Island overlook. They had a telescope pointed to a nest, where a pair of bald eagles are incubating an egg. "Last year they had two chicks that were successfully fledged. Now we have at least one, hopefully, if nothing goes wrong," said Wendy Perrone, executive director of Three Rivers Avian Center. She and her husband have been watching the Brooks Island eagle nest for years. Perrone said this is the fourth pair of eagles to use this nest in the past decade. At one point during the morning, the male eagle flew in to relieve the female and give her a break. "The female does most of the incubation, but he relieves her and lets her go take a little bit of time off every now and then, you know, go to the bath or eat or whatever you know," Perrone said. Since 1981, more eagles have been spotted every year in southern West Virginia, and even more remarkably, many of them are nesting here. Jim Phillips, the volunteer organizer of this event, said the eagle resurgence is largely due to fewer pesticides, like DDT, in the environment...

WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS

WVDEP investigating black water discharge at abandoned Raleigh County mine HELEN, W.Va. — The Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation at the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is investigating discolored water discharging from an abandoned mine in southern West Virginia. The discharge originates near the community of Helen in Raleigh County. The receiving stream is Berry Branch of Winding Gulf. Black discoloration has been observed in the Guyandotte River, downstream to the community of Allen Junction, approximately seven miles from the point of origin. According to WVDEP, water flow through underground mines can change due to geologic failures or fluctuations in amount of water in the mine, and changes in flow patterns can cause stagnant portions of a pool within the mine to move, resulting in flushing of accumulated material. Water samples have been collected for laboratory analysis. The discoloration reportedly has decreased, since first being reported on Saturday. WVDEP staff at the scene have investigated adjacent permitted mining operations, and do not believe those mines are contributing to the discoloration.

Plymale hopes aggressive approach to Beech Fork study will get project moving CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A feasibility study and two public hearings for a possible lodge and conference center at Beech Fork State Park have been added to a bill being considered by the legislature in the final days of the 60-day regular session. HB 3140 deals generally with state Division of Natural Resources infrastructure. Senator Bob Plymale, D-Wayne, and five other senators from the region, were able to get an amendment added to the bill that would require the state take a closer look at a possible lodge at Beech Fork. "The people have been telling me all they want is a voice and a chance to get this lodge and this conference center," Plymale said during a Saturday floor speech. Beech Fork is a 3,100 acre park located in Wayne County. It features a popular 720-acre lake and 31 miles of shoreline. Supporters of the park have been pushing for a lodge for decades. A bond issue for the project was a part of a bill signed into law in 2012 but the state's severe financial problems eventually prevented the project from advancing. Plymale's amendment requires two public hearings by Oct. 1. The first would focus on possible funding for a lodge and conference center including any public and private partnerships. The second public hearing would focus on the feasibility study and any recommendations. A report has to be submitted to the legislature by Dec. 1. State Commerce Secretary Ed Gaunch has agreed to the process, Plymale said. "It will allow us that opportunity for our voice to be heard and if we can make the right plea and decision, come up with a financial package that is right, it will be done," Plymale said. A 75-room lodge was considered in 2012. ...

US Senate committee to discuss climate change, electricity changes CHARLESTON, W.Va. — U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said Tuesday's hearing of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is aimed at putting lawmakers and federal agencies on the same page on addressing climate change and a global energy marketplace. "The hardest thing we have in Washington right now is establishing a set of facts that everybody agrees on," Manchin said Monday. "With all of the social media, cable news and everybody else establishing their opinion, they are justifying their opinion by trying to establish their own set of facts." The committee will hear from climate and energy analysts about global trends in electricity production and the impact of climate change. According to Manchin, the committee's ranking member, this will be the first hearing on climate change in eight years. "I don't think there is any science that doesn't

support that over the last century humans have had a tremendous impact on the detriment of the climate,” he said. “Climate is going to change and climate has always changed, but never in this rapid succession within the last century.” Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska serves as the committee’s chairman; West Virginia and Alaska rank fifth and 13th respectively regarding total energy production, with West Virginia having the second-highest coal production behind Wyoming. Manchin said he wants to incentivize the Department of Energy and universities to research technologies related to reducing emissions, including carbon capture technology, storage for renewable energy sources and alternative fuel options...

MARTINSBURG JOURNAL

US Senators Shelley Moore Capito, Joe Manchin introduce PFAS action plan legislation WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sens. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., a leader on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and Tom Carper, D-Del., top Democrat on the EPW Committee, introduced legislation that would mandate the Environmental Protection Agency within one year of enactment declare per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances as hazardous substances eligible for cleanup funds under the EPA Superfund law, and also enable a requirement that polluters undertake or pay for remediation. Other original co-sponsors include: Sens. Gary Peters, D-Mich.; Thom Tillis, R-N.C.; Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.; Marco Rubio, R-Fla.; Jeff Merkley, D-Ore.; Cory Gardner, R-Colo.; Jack Reed, D-R.I.; Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska; Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.; Richard Burr, R-N.C.; Michael Bennet, D-Colo.; and Joe Manchin, D-W.Va. U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., led the introduction of companion legislation in the House of Representatives earlier this Congress. “As we’ve learned, certain types of PFAS pollution can have serious consequences when it comes to the environment and to public health and safety. That’s something we need to address,” said Capito, chair of the EPW Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee. “Our bill will help provide resources for PFAS pollution cleanup and will make it possible to hold those responsible for it accountable. I’m proud to lead this bipartisan legislation with Sen. Carper and will continue working with my colleagues, EPA, and others to resolve the issue more broadly.” “In the recently released PFAS Action Plan, EPA restated its promise to declare PFAS as hazardous substances, but did not indicate how long it would take to fulfill that promise,” Carper said. “This is an issue that must be addressed with urgency — and that’s why this bill is so important. Designating these chemicals as hazardous substances will, at a minimum, start the process to ensuring contaminated sites across the country are cleaned up, and Americans are safer from the threat posed by these emerging contaminants. This is not the only measure needed to address the broader contamination problems, but it’s a start, and I’m proud this legislation has strong bipartisan support.” ...

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Capito, Manchin announce \$1.5 million for Welch wastewater project WELCH — A \$1.5 million grant has been awarded to Welch to expand the city’s wastewater system. The grant was announced Monday by Senators Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.). The funding, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants, will support the expansion of the city’s wastewater system into North Welch, serving about 93 new customers. “Modern, reliable infrastructure is critical to providing basic services West Virginians depend on,” Capito said. “Local, state, and federal partners are working hard to ensure McDowell County has the resources to replace outdated infrastructure and support healthier communities. As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee and as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to fight for infrastructure improvements for West Virginia.” “Updating and investing in our wastewater infrastructure is absolutely critical, especially in rural areas of the state where it is long overdue,” Manchin added. “These investments will not only help process storm and wastewater in Welch but will also provide jobs and new economic opportunities to the people of McDowell County. I thank the USDA for partnering with us and will keep fighting to make sure that investments like this take place in all 55 counties in our state.”

FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER

Commentary: Why I don’t trust government to save us from GenX We ran that headline on Page 1 again — “Elevated levels of GenX found near plant”. How many times have we said it now? Twenty? Thirty? A hundred? Maybe even more? It’s like a drumbeat that won’t stop. It doesn’t end because there’s *that much* of the stuff out there, atmospheric emissions spread for decades by the winds and soaked into the ground by the rain, and more of it in the Cape Fear River. not just in the water but deep in sediment, where it may sit for years, a gift that keeps on giving. If you think government could have prevented this mess by more rigorous oversight of the former DuPont plant — now run by the chemical giant’s spinoff, Chemours — you’re likely right. The companies have long manufactured chemicals there that

are known for their environmental persistence — they stick around for a long, long time — and more recently have become a focus because of their health effects, which include cancers and other illnesses. But despite all our environmental advances of the past 50 years, including passage of the Clean Water Act and the launching of the Environmental Protection Agency, the fact is that most industrial chemicals remain unregulated and largely untested. And chemical companies, which employ thousands and make big political contributions, have a lot of friends in government. The chemicals made by DuPont and Chemours at their sprawling Fayetteville Works, down on the Bladen County line, are wonder products that have given us things most of us would be loathe to lose. That includes the nonstick cookware you just made your eggs in, and the Gore-Tex jacket you've been wearing all the time in this wickedly rainy winter. Would you give up your stain-free carpet or armchair upholstery? Do you want your pizza delivered in an uncoated box that will be soggy and dripping by the time it reaches your house? All of those coatings are made with the kinds of chemicals manufactured down the road on the banks of the Cape Fear River... Cut to the bottom line: One state inspector discovered the problem that we're facing today *15 years ago* and state environmental regulators gagged him instead of doing what should be their core job: protecting the public's health and safety. So in the same week in which we saw the U.S. Senate confirm a former coal lobbyist to lead the EPA, you don't need to ask me why I don't expect government to do its job and keep our environment clean. Our rivers may not catch fire anymore, but that doesn't mean we're safe. I'm glad those pesky environmental watchdog groups are out there. Sadly, they're our first line of defense — maybe our only defense.

PARKERSBURG NEWS-SENTINEL

DEP to conduct final testing at Johns Manville site VIENNA — After a long process, the parcel of the Johns Manville site closest to the Ohio River could be nearing completion. Derek Hancock and Tom Rebar, both with the state Department of Environmental Protection, were unable to visit the Johns Manville site on Friday because of extra training, but weather permitting, they are expected to be on site Tuesday, Mayor Randy Rapp said. Rapp provided the News and Sentinel with the DEP's Revised Risk Assessment Approval Letter and a report from their most recent pre-remedial sampling, which was completed on Jan. 3. The report says the reason for the visit was split sampling and that contaminants were metals. A pre-remedial metals split sampling will need to be done to define the area of excavation, the DEP said. Rapp said the metal contaminant is arsenic. Vienna Council member Jim Leach said at Thursday's city council meeting that when Rebar and Hancock arrive, they will be using a XRF Field Testing Device down by the gas well, looking to define the area of excavation for the arsenic. Terry Fletcher, the public information specialist-FOIA officer at the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, told the News and Sentinel earlier this week that the DEP's project manager for the site, Hancock, and Rebar will be on-site to conduct the final testing necessary to complete the Remedial Action Work Plan. Fletcher said that once the RAWP has been submitted and approved by DEP, the defined remediation will begin on the River Parcel of Johns Manville Glass. Once this work is completed, the next step is the Remedial Action Report (RAR) and Land Use Covenant (LUC) to be completed and submitted to the DEP for review...

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Commentary: Baltimore needs a greener option for trash The Baltimore Sun's editorial board recently described the challenging road we have ahead if we are sincere about finding alternatives to trash incineration in Baltimore ("It won't be easy, but Baltimore can find alternatives to the Wheelabrator incinerator," Feb. 19). As someone who has chosen to make Baltimore my home, I'm more concerned about the challenges we will face if we continue down the path we are on. Baltimore clearly has a trash problem. Go to any community association meeting, and trash — and the associated pests it attracts — is likely to be a top agenda item. But if we continue to rely on incineration as our sole method of dealing with our trash, we'll be throwing away the opportunity to create sustainable jobs, protect our environment and ensure a healthy future for our city and state. Baltimore already has one of the worst rates of asthma in the country, and one of its main drivers is the fine particulate matter put into the air from burning trash. Incineration also contributes

to a growing climate crisis, releasing as much greenhouse gas as a coal-burning plant. And as a city defined by a legacy of segregation, these impacts fall disproportionately on low-income communities of color who live closest to the Wheelabrator incinerator and who are breathing in the air polluted by our trash. Reducing our dependence on incineration provides an opportunity to chart a new, truly sustainable path for our city. In spite of the challenges ahead, what makes me hopeful is that people throughout Baltimore already have a vision for more equitable solutions to move toward zero waste. The Mayor's Office of Sustainability is actively working on plan to increase reuse, recycling and composting and increase renewable sources of energy throughout Baltimore creating 5-to-10 times more jobs than incineration...

Private oyster farming has helped the Chesapeake Bay. Not everyone is happy about the practice ST. MARY'S COUNTY, Md. — No oyster could thrive on the muddy and sandy bottom of St. Jerome Creek, but there they are. Inside submerged metal cages, millions of the shellfish form portable reefs that are teeming with crabs, minnowlike fish and other life. From a work boat, oyster farmer Ryan Brown pulls up a cage marked with a yellow buoy, an indication that its inhabitants will soon be 2 years old. They look plump and healthy, with deep, cupped shells. And later this year, some of them will leave St. Mary's County waters to be served at raw bars in wide-ranging places including Baltimore, Chicago and Atlanta. A decade ago, Maryland politicians rewrote laws that allow True Chesapeake Oyster Co. and other business ventures to use public waterways for private gain — and for the benefit of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem at large. Since then, the number of oysters farmed in Maryland waters has grown more than 20 times over, equaling about one-third the haul of wild oysters watermen dredge up annually. That's a meaningful gain, say most of those who are counting on aquaculture's success. But not everyone agrees it's a positive development. Especially in St. Mary's, it's becoming clear that the growth won't come without pains...

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Tracking life in DC's urban streams has its ups — and downs (Friday) Regular visitors to the 1,800-acre national park surrounding Rock Creek in Washington, DC, might be surprised to learn what's living — and what's struggling to live — just below the water's surface. For starters, American eels have been spotted in Rock Creek tributaries often enough — once in 2010 and three times last year — that the long, slithery sightings are no longer considered a fluke. Their presence was the highlight of a 28-page report recently released by the Audubon Naturalist Society, whose staff members and volunteers have been counting species in three Rock Creek tributaries for nearly a decade. "We'd been concerned about whether [eels] could make it up Rock Creek, but [there was] a lot of work done to remove dams and obstacles to fish passage," said Cathy Wiss, coordinator of the ANS water quality monitoring program. She said the snakelike fish lives in freshwater but returns to the ocean to spawn. "They're a good indicator species." The report also identifies a "surprising diversity of life" in the heavily urbanized streams, which include Melvin Hazen Run, Pinehurst Branch and Normanstone Run. Like streams in many other cities — into which rain washes pollution from nearby parking lots, streets and rooftops — their water quality is considered "poor" or "very degraded." But that doesn't mean they're lifeless. Since 2011, the ANS and its teams of volunteers have gone out each season to net 20, 1-foot-square samples of what's living in the streams, sorting them into buckets for identification according to the Maryland Biological Stream Survey's protocol, then putting them back in the water.

VA state board lets pipeline permit stand, despite violations The Virginia State Water Control Board voted on Friday not to revoke a permit allowing a natural gas pipeline to be built across streams as it winds its way across the state's southwest corner. The Mountain Valley Pipeline is one of two pipeline projects touching parts of West Virginia and Virginia. The second project, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, would cross part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed on its path to North Carolina. Both had earned federal permits in support of their construction, but several have been revoked or challenged over the last year. Virginia had approved water quality permits for both projects in 2017, but the Mountain Valley Pipeline has since logged a large number of environmental violations. Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring and the state Department of Environmental Quality sued the project on Dec. 7 over more than 300 violations between June and mid-November, mostly related to improper erosion control and stormwater management. The governor-appointed board decided to reconsider the permit but opted to uphold it after a four-hour, closed-door meeting, during which the board consulted with its attorneys and DEQ staff. Protestors who oppose the Mountain Valley Pipeline shouted "Shame!" as the seven-member board revealed its decision. A group of union workers hired to build the pipeline and seated in an opposite corner of the room — many of them unemployed while work has stopped — applauded. Board members Robert Wayland and James Lofton said they recently visited some of the sites where the pipeline was under

construction to see the water quality violations for themselves. “I saw sediment and erosion controls that had failed... and the sediment that was escaping from the right of way,” Lofton said of the visit before abruptly revealing the board’s decision. “I’m deeply concerned about that, but I’m also deeply concerned that the board simply does not have the authority to revoke the permit.”...

VA won't be penalized over menhaden regs if it stays under cap Virginia will not face penalties for failing to formally adopt new catch limits on Atlantic menhaden — as long as harvests stay within limits established by East Coast fishery managers. The decision by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in February headed off a potential legal showdown as to whether it had scientific justification for slashing the commercial menhaden harvest in the Bay in 2017, even as it raised catch limits along most of the coast. Since then, the Virginia General Assembly has twice failed to adopt the commission’s mandated annual Bay cap of 51,000 metric tons. Failure to adopt the limit put the state out of compliance with the commission’s regulations. As a result, the ASMFC could ask the U.S. Department of Commerce to impose a moratorium on all menhaden harvests in Virginia. Twice last year the ASMFC considered, but delayed, such an action. Steven Bowman, who heads the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, said his agency monitored 2018 harvests both through catch records and aerial surveillance and would continue to do so. “The cap was not exceeded,” he said. “It did not come close to being exceeded.” “It has been a difficult situation,” Bowman added. “We believe we have done our best as far as doing what is the intent of the [ASMFC].” Robert Boyles of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources made the motion to indefinitely postpone action. Boyles said the ASMFC was on shaky legal ground to act against Virginia because harvests in state waters were still less than the commission’s recommendations. “It is important to note that the law doesn’t support a noncompliance finding here,” he said. “That is the hard and fast fact.”...

The world beneath your feet Which is greater — the number of organisms in a handful of healthy soil or the number of people on Earth? If you said organisms, you are correct! Know some more dirt on soil? Take this quiz to see how well you are grounded on the world beneath your feet. Answers are below.

- CHESAPEAKE BAY MAGAZINE

VIDEO: Old Christmas Trees Get New Life on Poplar Island Christmas is more than two months behind us, but some of those dry, forgotten evergreen trees have just started a second career on the Chesapeake Bay. When folks in Easton put their trees out for pickup, they weren’t just mulched. More than 150 Christmas trees were loaded onto a boat and motored out to Poplar Island, the ever-growing island built with dredged material from the Port of Baltimore’s shipping channels. There, the trees become habitat for waterfowl. *Bay Bulletin’s* Cheryl Costello got a special look at the Christmas tree project in action. Watch below:

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA MERCURY

Commentary: Citizen oversight of Virginia’s environmental regulations increasingly looks like a farce Even after more than two years of being steadily bludgeoned into subservience by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Attorney General’s office over the regulations of a pair of contentious natural gas pipeline projects, Friday’s meeting of the Virginia State Water Control Board was a new low point. The meeting, mostly conducted behind closed doors as an anxious public waited for hours, concluded with varying flimsy excuses for why the board was backing away from a public hearing on revoking a state water quality certification for the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Actually, not quite. The finale was more revolting than that. As board members fumbled through explanations before an increasingly angry audience, Chairwoman Heather Wood abruptly called for an adjournment. Then, most of the board members beat a swift retreat behind a wall of state troopers, who were necessary, it seems, to protect the citizen board from citizens asking it to do its job and protect their water. One audience member loudly pointed out that the cops would be more useful lined up at the base of mountains in southwest Virginia to stop the mud running off the pipeline job sites...

Appeals court vacates Dominion’s James River transmission line permit (March 1) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

failed to follow federal legal requirements when it gave Dominion Energy a permit to build a massive power line and 17 towers across the James River near Historic Jamestowne, according to a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. The transmission lines run from Surry to Skiffes Creek and include towers reaching as high as 295 feet. Dominion has said the line is necessary to provide reliable electricity to the Peninsula. The Court of Appeals issued its decision Friday, according to a Preservation Virginia press release. It vacated Dominion's permit and directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop an Environmental Impact Statement. "The D.C. Circuit not only ordered the Corps to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on remand, but also to consider practicable alternatives to the transmission line in compliance with NEPA and the Clean Water Act," a news release from the National Parks Conservation Association states. Historic groups strongly opposed the towers' construction, arguing that the project would severely alter the landscape around the historic settlement. "Preserving the James River and powering the surrounding region aren't mutually exclusive," said Paul Edmondson, interim president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the release. "Had the Army Corps followed the law, a project alternative that delivers power and preserves this nationally significant landscape could have been identified. We remain committed to seeing these towers removed." The towers were turned on earlier this week, moving 500,000 volts of power across the river, according to The Daily Press. They cost about \$430 million to construct...

After hearing testimony, State Water Control Board decides not to revoke Mountain Valley Pipeline certification
(March 1) — The State Water Control Board decided Friday it would not consider revoking a Mountain Valley Pipeline certification. Mountain Valley Pipeline, with members citing uncertainty about the board's authority, said the board's decision was a "disappointment." Environmental Quality have been under pressure to stop work on the 100-mile pipeline planned to run from West Virginia to North Carolina by 2017. The controversial project is the subject of a criminal investigation by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. In December, made the motion to expel a pipeline contractor, a woman Heather Wood and me

DEQ has not stopped work on Mountain Valley Pipeline?
(March 1) FLOYD — Nearly one year ago, Gov. Ralph Northam celebrated newly passed legislation he touted as an expansion of Virginia's ability to protect its waterways. The two bills established a process for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to stop work on large natural gas pipelines if it determined there was a "substantial adverse impact to water quality," or if such a threat was "imminent." "From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, and all the rivers and streams in between, our water quality is of paramount importance to our health and our economy and I will protect it as long as I am governor," Northam trumpeted in a March 16 press release. The governor also added an emergency clause to the bills, putting them into effect immediately. In retrospect, he needn't have bothered. Fifty weeks after the governor's press release, the DEQ hasn't used those powers to stop work on the Mountain Valley Pipeline, despite the fact that the DEQ and a state contractor recorded more than 300 violations of erosion, sediment control, and stormwater regulations on the MVP between June and November. That's according to Attorney General Mark Herring, who sued the pipeline's developers in December. "The whole idea behind those bills was to make sure they had the authority to stop work when problems arose," said Sen. Creigh Deeds, D-Bath, who carried the two bills outlining the stop work process for DEQ. "I think they've had the opportunity to stop work. If they've not utilized the powers they've had under those bills to the maximum extent possible, I'm disappointed. But there's not a whole lot I can do about it." Pipeline opponents responded to Northam's announcement last year with skepticism, but they're still frustrated that DEQ hasn't acted more aggressively since then...

13 NEWS NOW NORFOLK

Navy holds public meeting, will begin testing wells near Northwest Annex for possible contaminants (Friday)

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — The U.S. Navy is staying on top of potential water contamination concerns in Chesapeake. On Thursday, it held two public meetings for people who live near the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hampton Roads-Northwest Annex near Chesapeake, Virginia. The informal-style meeting was a chance for residents to have a better understanding of the water sampling procedures the Navy could begin as early as tomorrow. The first meeting was at the Northwest Annex Gymnasium from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and the second one was at the Mariner Community Recreation Center from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Navy had representatives from the Agency for Toxic Substances and

Disease Registry Region 3, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Health and the City of Chesapeake. Test results will determine if PFOS and PFOA, two types of chemicals known collectively as PFAS, may have seeped through groundwater and into private water wells at nearby homes. They'll also determine whether the chemical levels are higher than what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends. The most common thing the Navy uses the chemicals for has been through the firefighting agent, aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). Tammy Redenius, a nearby resident, said she has already scheduled a date for the Navy to collect water samples from her home. She was relieved to learn the Navy will conduct tests. "I'm actually really glad," said Redenius. "I'm sure it's expensive to have your water tested." Others, like Patrick Jones, said they are anxious for the test results. "[It's] Very concerning," said Jones. "My first thought was a possible resale of my house. Then, we think about our health, but first and foremost, health is more important than the resale of the house." Jones said he and his family have switched to drinking bottled water since they learned the Navy would begin testing their well for contaminants...

ROANOKE TIMES

MVP asks state board to discontinue process aimed at stopping pipeline construction (Friday) Facing another snag in a complex permitting process, the developers of the largest natural gas pipeline ever built in Southwest Virginia are pushing back. In a Feb. 12 letter to state regulators, an attorney for the Mountain Valley Pipeline asked the State Water Control Board to discontinue a process it started last year that could lead to the revocation of a water quality certification for project, which has been cited repeatedly for violating environmental standards. The water board is scheduled to meet Friday to discuss the details of a future revocation hearing. "Mountain Valley accepts that this project has been, and continues to be, perhaps the most heavily scrutinized construction project in Virginia's history," the company said in a letter to David Paylor, director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and executive secretary of the water board. With so much scrutiny already, and with the project more than halfway done, it would serve little purpose to consider revoking the certification at this point, wrote Todd Normane, deputy general counsel for Equitrans Midstream Corp., an affiliated company in the joint venture. And even if the board were to reverse its earlier approval, Normane wrote, Mountain Valley would still hold a valid license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the lead agency overseeing construction of the 303-mile pipeline through the two Virginias. "Unilateral action by the board at this time cannot amend or invalidate that license or otherwise block construction," his letter stated. A spokeswoman for FERC declined to comment. The letter from Mountain Valley is its first detailed response to the water board's surprise move in December, when it voted 4-3 to hold a hearing on whether to revoke a certification it had issued for the project one year earlier....

WDBJ-TV 7 ROANOKE

State Water Control Board to hold Mountain Valley Pipeline meeting (Friday) Board members are considering whether to revoke a key permit, following reports of excessive runoff and erosion. Work on the Mountain Valley Pipeline started just over a year ago. The company says it has worked to design a route with the least overall impact, and done its best to protect the environment, but opponents say the company's track record proves otherwise. Dan Crawford is Chair of the Sierra Club's Roanoke Group. "Let's face it, It's one thing for a developer like MVP to demonstrate knowledge of regulations and and their determination to do it right and do it well," Crawford told WDBJ7, "and it's quite another for their work after about a year to stand up to scrutiny. It hasn't." Pipeline opponents say they have documented more than 300 violations of state regulations designed to control runoff and erosion. In a letter to the board on Thursday, 10 organizations urged board members to move quickly to revoke the water quality certification, and stop all work while the review moves forward. "It's their job to see that this project, MVP, is done properly," Crawford said. "That's their job, and so far they've failed miserably." In a letter to the State Water Control Board, the Deputy General Counsel for Equitrans Midstream Corporation said it is has faced extraordinary challenges because of historic rainfall. And Todd Normane wrote it is fundamentally unfair to reconsider the project at such a late stage of construction....

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Editorial: Protect our underwater ecosystems The oceans are a fragile ecosystem filled with life we do not fully understand — we must take care of them. Each time we dip a toe in the Chesapeake Bay or play in the waves produced by the Atlantic Ocean, we are delving into an underwater ecosystem that still guards a bounty of secrets. We are reminded of just how mysterious the oceans are when something otherworldly washes ashore. Such events force us to ask whether we are being the best stewards of our planet, especially when we can link the deaths of nearly a dozen

whales each year found along Atlantic beaches to human hands. In recent weeks, several carcasses were found in Virginia and North Carolina. Each is an 8,000-pound reminder of why we must continue to study the effects humans have on these fragile ecosystems that we still know little about. The discoveries are part of an elevated death toll of whales, dolphins and other cetacean species since 2016. On Feb. 17, researchers were alerted to the presence of a juvenile humpback on Corolla beach, in the Outer Banks, as well as a second humpback the same day in Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, in Virginia Beach. A third whale was found the week prior near Oregon Inlet and a dwarf sperm whale was discovered in Nags Head — both in the Outer Banks — the week before that. Many species of whales are now migrating north to feed after reproducing and giving birth in the warmer tropical waters of the Caribbean during the winter months. The trip is thousands of miles and can be taxing on the animals. Deaths can be an unfortunate, yet natural, results of that journey... Anyone who finds a beached whale, dolphin or another sea creature should report it by calling the Greater Atlantic Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 866-755-6622. The research scientists can perform on these animals while their alive — as well as postmortem — is important to our understanding of their lives.

MISCELLANEOUS

GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE

Lawmakers Look to Crack Down on Federal Employee Travel Lawmakers in both parties have put forward legislation to place new restrictions on the travel of federal employees, seeking more oversight and ethical spending of taxpayer dollars. The 2019 Taxpayers Don't Incur Meaningless Expenses (Taxpayers DIME) Act ([H.R. 1463](#)) would require federal agencies to report to Congress each quarter on the travel of any senior official on government aircraft. The measure would also task the Office of Government Ethics with developing new suggestions for "strengthening federal travel regulations." The legislation would also block funding for any travel that violates the portions of federal regulations dictating restrictions on the use of government aircraft. "When I was elected to Congress, I made a commitment to clean up Washington and end the special taxpayer-funded perks for elected officials and bureaucrats," said Rep. Tom O'Halleran, D-Ariz., who introduced the bill. "We must hold our government leaders to the highest standards, and with so many high-profile ethics violations in the past years, it is clear we have failed to do that. No matter who controls Congress or the White House, we have to hold everyone accountable." Several Trump administration officials have become ensnared by various travel scandals, leading, at least in part, to the resignations of former Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke, former Veterans Affairs Department Secretary David Shulkin and former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. O'Halleran introduced another measure to require the Defense Department to report quarterly on presidential travel, including costs incurred by the commander in chief's travel to properties he or his family owns or operates...

BLOOMBERG ENVIRONMENT

Wheeler Credits EPA's Superfund Success to Pruitt's Efforts EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler is attributing the accomplishments of the agency's flagship environmental cleanup program to efforts started by his predecessor, Scott Pruitt. The Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund task force, created by Pruitt in 2017, embarked on a two-year revamp of the program. The cleanup process can take decades for a single site, and Pruitt and Wheeler have focused on speeding that up and pushing sites toward redevelopment. The agency's metrics for success include deleting sites from the National Priorities List and assessing contamination. Wheeler has also kept watch over a short "emphasis list" of sites where the agency has worked to make decisions quickly and move cleanup forward. "A lot of the work we've done over the past year has been directly attributable to the emphasis list as well as the Superfund task force," Wheeler said at a press conference March 4 in New York. The agency assessed 664 contaminated sites in the past fiscal year. Over the history of the Superfund program, the EPA has completed more than 96,000 contaminated site assessments, according to a [report](#) the agency released March 4. The agency also removed 22 sites from the National Priorities List, which contains the most contaminated sites in the country. The EPA has deleted 412 sites from the list over the program's history.

Let Taxpayers See Formaldehyde Analysis, Democrats Tell EPA Taxpayers deserve to see the EPA's long-delayed

evaluation of formaldehyde, three Democratic senators and the head of the House science panel told the agency March 4. "We urge you to immediately proceed to review, finalize, and publish the formaldehyde health assessment without further delay, new studies, and taxpayer expense," the lawmakers wrote a [letter](#) to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler. The letter was signed by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), chairwoman of the Science, Space and Technology Committee, as well as Sens. Tom Carper (D-Del.), ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Edward Markey (D-Mass.), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.). More than \$10 million of taxpayer money has been spent since 1997, when the EPA first began to update a previous analysis of the chemical, the legislators said. The legislators also asked Wheeler and EPA Scientific Integrity Officer Francesco T. Grifo, in a separate [letter](#), to examine whether David Dunlap or other political appointees violated ethics by interfering with and delaying the formaldehyde assessment. Dunlap, who now serves as deputy assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Research & Development, formerly was the director for policy and regulatory affairs at Koch Industries Inc., a major formaldehyde producer. Dunlap isn't supposed to be involved with the formaldehyde assessment, from which he recused himself, the legislators said. The EPA will respond through the proper channels, an agency spokeswoman told Bloomberg Environment in an email...

GREENWIRE / E&E NEWS

[Frustrated by EPA, states blaze ahead on PFAS](#) EPA's action plan on toxic chemicals found in drinking water did not satisfy several states that plan to push forward with their own policies. The per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, plan announced last month promised a decision from the agency within the year on maximum contaminant level regulations for two chemicals, PFOA and PFOS. Some experts say the regulatory process could take as long as 10 years before a rule is finalized. And while EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said he has "every intention" to set a limit, the agency could come back in a year and decide it won't regulate the chemicals, which have been linked to cancer and thyroid problems. That is why states should "press on," said Betsy Southerland, the former director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water. So far, only New Jersey has a maximum contaminant level, or MCL, for a chemical in the PFAS family. Citing federal inaction, however, several states have stepped up with their own plans to regulate types of PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS. At least seven states have policies or have indicated they are pursuing policies stricter than EPA's current health advisory of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and PFOS. They include Alaska, California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. "I have never seen anything this big happen this quickly, and I attribute this to the ability of communities to organize," said Wendy Heiger-Bernays, a clinical professor of environmental health at Boston University. "I think the states should be running with it," Heiger-Bernays continued. "By waiting, we are exposing people unnecessarily." At least eight states have adopted 11 bills related to PFAS, according to Safer States. "EPA's plan only increases the need for state policies that ensure safe drinking water and healthy communities," said Sarah Doll, the national director of Safer States. "The bottom line is that we need to stop the use of these harmful chemicals and states are stepping up to do that."...

[Pittsburgh plants must halt emissions after fire — officials](#) (Friday) Health officials are ordering U.S. Steel to stop its violation of federal sulfur dioxide standards at three Pittsburgh-area processing plants following a Christmas Eve fire that affected pollution controls at one of its plants. The Allegheny County Health Department issued the enforcement order yesterday. It says U.S. Steel must reduce its use of coke oven gas and daily sulfur dioxide emissions at Mon Valley Works. Coke is a type of coal product commonly used as industrial fuel. U.S. Steel spokeswoman Meghan Cox says the company made significant environmental performance improvements before the fire and significant progress on repairs since the fire. She said the plant is working around the clock to resolve the issue. The Dec. 24 fire at the Clairton Coke Works plant had disabled the its coke gas processing operations and emissions increased.

[Senators introduce bipartisan PFAS bill](#) (March 1) A bipartisan group of senators today introduced legislation that would force EPA to designate certain toxic chemicals found in drinking water as hazardous substances under a Superfund law. The policy shift would require polluters to pay for remediation at sites contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. "Designating these chemicals as hazardous substances will, at a minimum, start the process to ensuring contaminated sites across the country are cleaned up, and Americans are safer from the threat posed by these emerging contaminants," said Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee. The [bill](#), titled the "PFAS Action Act of 2019," would require EPA to designate the chemicals as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act within one year of the bill's enactment. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) introduced a companion bill in the House in January ([E&E Daily](#), Jan. 15).

The chemicals are used in a range of products from firefighting foam to nonstick cookware and have been linked to several health problems, including cancer...

EPA: Research office to 'coordinate' regional labs EPA's research office will take on a greater role over the agency's laboratories sprawled across the country. Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in an internal email obtained by E&E News that starting in fiscal 2020, the Office of Research and Development will be the national program manager for the regional labs. "Beginning in FY 2020, ORD will coordinate EPA's regional laboratory operations, in addition to those of EPA's research laboratories," Wheeler said in the email sent to staff yesterday. He said the move will help ensure EPA program needs for laboratory support will be met. The acting EPA chief, however, said this designation for the research office will not change the organizational structure for the regional labs, which will still report to regional leadership. Former EPA officials said the change has been discussed in prior administrations. It could help the agency but will need funding to be pulled off, they said. Thomas Burke, who served as EPA's science adviser during the Obama administration's later years, said the research office could oversee as well as support regional labs. "What it means is ORD will be kind of an ombudsman for the regional labs and ensure quality and consistency as well as be a voice for the labs in Washington. It's an enormous laboratory enterprise, and organizationally this can be very beneficial," said Burke, now a professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health...

Agency stymied chemical risk program — GAO EPA leaders stymied research from the agency's toxic chemical risk assessments program, said a Government Accountability Office report released today. The GAO probe found that between June and December 2018, agency leaders told employees on the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) to stop assessing chemicals while discussions about the program's priorities were ongoing. Starting in June, the administrator's office told IRIS officials they could not release any documents without a formal request from the program's leaders, said the report. Agency officials asked IRIS leaders in August to confirm whether ongoing risk assessments were necessary. However, two months later, in October, officials asked them to further limit these requests. Several chemical assessments were dropped, including one on formaldehyde, said the watchdog's report, noting that the absence of assessments could create confusion. The probe added that EPA did not provide information on their status or whether they will continue or discontinue work on the assessments...

EPA deletes record number of sites EPA announced today that it has deleted all or part of 22 sites from the National Priorities List — the largest number since 2005. "By renewing and elevating our focus on Superfund under President Trump, we are accelerating cleanups, returning sites to productive reuse, and revitalizing communities across the country," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a statement. Last year, the agency also identified 51 sites as meeting its "sitewide ready for anticipated use" designation. That was the highest number of sites returned to communities for redevelopment since 2013. EPA implemented nearly 250 actions on contaminated sites that were an imminent and substantial threat to human health and the environment, according to a report. Experts last year questioned EPA's conclusions, arguing the accomplishments come from decades of work before President Trump took office (Greenwire, Oct. 10, 2018). Last month, the Government Accountability Office said in a report that EPA was not providing American Indian tribes with reliable data related to Superfund sites...

COAL: Westmoreland emerges from bankruptcy negotiations A federal bankruptcy judge has approved Westmoreland Coal Co.'s restructuring plan to escape bankruptcy, shifting ownership of its coal mines and dropping retiree benefits...

MSNBC

Who is the new EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler? (Video link) The Senate narrowly confirmed the president's new pick to head the Environmental Protection Agency. NBC's Jacob Ward joins Ali Velshi to take a closer look at Andrew Wheeler and why discuss why so many groups are worried about his confirmation.

CNN

Coal ash contaminating groundwater nationwide, groups say Waste ash from hundreds of coal-fired power plants has contaminated groundwater in 39 states with toxic substances like arsenic, lithium and mercury, according to a report by two environmental groups that was based on data the plants reported to the US Environmental Protection Agency. The report, released Monday by the Environmental Integrity Project and Earthjustice, highlights more than a dozen instances

in which those substances have reached drinking water supplies. The full extent of the effect on drinking water supplies is not known because private sources of drinking water are not tested, the report said. "Virtually all coal plants are poisoning our water," said author Abel Russ, an attorney with the Environmental Integrity Project. The ponds and landfills used to store coal ash are frequently unlined, allowing toxins to leach into groundwater. The report is based on groundwater monitoring data from more than 4,600 wells. It compared measured levels to drinking water or other standards. Contamination was found in groundwater near 242 of the 265 plants that recently reported data required by the 2015 rule. Fifty-two percent of those sites are contaminated with cancer-causing arsenic, and 60% are polluted with lithium, which is linked to neurological damage, according to the report. Last year, a federal appeals court ordered the EPA to re-evaluate the Obama-era rule, saying it did not go far enough. For example, it suggested that the EPA should go further to require that coal ash ponds be lined, because government data showed that "a significant portion" of the 500-plus ponds covered under the rule "are likely to contaminate groundwater."...